

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T MADRID 3785

EXDIS

LISBON FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS:OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER F.)
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE VISIT: EVALUATION OF FIRST VICE
PRESIDENT LT. GEN. GUTIERREZ MELLADO

1. THE FOLLOWING IS MY PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE FIRST
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, LT. GEN. MANUEL
GUTIERREZ MELLADO, TO SUPPLEMENT THE REGULAR BIOGRAPHIC
MATERIAL PREPARED FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO MADRID.

2. I HAVE KNOWN GUTIERREZ MELLADO SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN
MADRID, FIRST IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHIEF SPANISH MILITARY
REPRESENTATIVE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE US BASES THAT
FINALLY LED TO THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION
BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES. I HAVE CONTINUED TO
SEE HIM SINCE HE BEGAN HIS RISE TO THE POST HE NOW HOLDS.
I FIND HIM TO BE AN INTELLIGENT PERSON, INTENSE AND
DISCIPLINED, AND ONE GIVEN TO WEIGHING HIS WORDS CARE-
FULLY. HE IS A MAN OF GREAT PERSONAL COMMITMENT AND
INTEGRITY. WHILE STAUNCHLY DEFENDING SPANISH POSITIONS,
HE HAS BEEN HELPFUL TO THE UNITED STATES ON MORE THAN ONE
OCCASION IN HIS CURRENT POST.

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3. GUTIERREZ MELLADO EARLY GAINED A PUBLIC REPUTATION AS
A LIBERAL, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HIDE-BOUND
SENIOR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, UNTIL
HE BECAME FIRST VICE PRESIDENT HE RARELY EXPRESSED SIGNIFI-
CANT POLITICAL VIEWS EVEN IN PRIVATE, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT
WHEN FRANCO DIED IT WAS OBVIOUS THE SYSTEM HAD TO BE CHANGED.

HE WAS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN LOYAL TO THE KING, AND THE KING IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE RESPECTED HIM FROM THE TIME GUTIERREZ MELLADO WAS A MILITARY PROCTOR FOR THE KING IN HIS YOUTH. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT CLOSE TO THE KING UNTIL THE PROGRESSION OF APPOINTMENTS THAT HAVE MADE HIM THE KING'S GENERAL.

4. I JUDGE GUTIERREZ MELLADO'S BY NOW EVIDENT COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIZATION TO HAVE GROWN AS A RESULT OF HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE KING AND SUAREZ, ALTHOUGH IT WAS INCIPIENT BEFORE. WHEN HE BECAME FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, AS HE TOLD ME, HE DID NOT KNOW SUAREZ AT ALL WELL BUT NOW RESPECTS HIM AS A BRILLIANT, DEDICATED POLITICAL LEADER. THE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE TOTALLY LOYAL TO THE KING AND SUAREZ AND TO THEIR POLITICAL PROGRAM AT CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL COST TO HIS REPUTATION WITHIN THE MILITARY, WHERE HIS SUPPORT, AT THE LAST, FOR THE LEGALIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS MADE HIM ENEMIES. BECAUSE GUTIERREZ MELLADO HAS BEEN BURNED TO SOME DEGREE WITHIN THE SERVICES BY THE LEGALIZATION EPISODE, HIS FUTURE IS NOT CLEAR. BUT I AM SURE OF ONE THING--HE WILL DO THE KING'S BIDDING WITHIN REASON EVEN IF THAT MEANS BEING SACRIFICED.

5. US OFFICIALS HAVE HAD AN INTIMATE ASSOCIATION WITH GUTIERREZ MELLADO DURING HIS SEVERAL YEARS OF ACTIVITY ON THE BASE RELATIONSHIP. HE WAS A TOUGH, ABLE DEFENDER OF SPANISH POSITIONS, WHO WAS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE LACK OF EQUALITY IN THE SPANISH-US RELATIONSHIP THOUGH PERCEPTIVE IN UNDERSTANDING THE INTERESTS OF THE US SIDE. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, GUTIERREZ MELLADO HAS MORE THAN USUAL
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FAMILIARITY WITH THE UNITED STATES. SOME YEARS BACK WHILE WORKING IN AN INDUSTRIAL CONCERN, HE SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS TRAVELING AROUND OUR COUNTRY BY BUS TO GET A FEELING FOR THE UNITED STATES. HE HAS AFFECTIONATE MEMORIES OF THIS EXPERIENCE. IN HIS PRESENT POSITION, HE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY OPEN TO AND WARM TO VISITORS AND EMBASSY OFFICIALS ALIKE, PERHAPS IN PART OUT OF GRATITUDE FOR THE SUPPORT WE HAVE GIVEN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN THESE DIFFICULT DAYS. WE BELIEVE GUTIERREZ MELLADO TO BE DESIROUS OF MOVING THE SPANISH MILITARY INTO A GREATER COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WESTERN DEFENSE POSTURE, BUT HE HAS TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS ON THIS BECAUSE HIS FORTHCOMING ATTITUDES ARE NOT SHARED WIDELY IN THE SPANISH MILITARY.

6. AS YOU WILL SEE WHEN HE GREET'S YOU AT PLANESIDE FOR THE ARRIVAL CEREMONIES, GUTIERREZ MELLADO DOES NOT POSSESS WHAT IS USUALLY THOUGHT OF AS A MILITARY BEARING AND IS SLIGHT OF BUILD. NONETHELESS, HE WAS A VERY BRAVE MAN DURING THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR WHEN HE WAS ONE OF THE LEADERS

OF FRANCO'S UNDERGROUND IN MADRID, SOMETHING THAT IS NOT
TALKED ABOUT A GREAT DEAL--PERHAPS BECAUSE HE PREFERS IT
THAT WAY. HE SPEAKS FRENCH AND SOME ENGLISH BUT PREFERS
TO DEAL IN SPANISH. STABLER

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